Appl. No. 09/924,753 Amdt. dated December 31, 2003 Reply to Office action of September 9, 2003

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

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Claim 1 (currently amended): A method for

determining a threshold value $(O_{max}, O_{min}, O_{TR})$ serving to

limit an output signal of a processing unit into which an

input signal has been fed, characterized in that a level

of the input signal is determined and that the threshold

value $(O_{max}, O_{min}, O_{TR})$ is set controlled as a function of

the level of the input signal.

Claim 2 (previously presented): The method as in claim 1, wherein from the said level a mean level (I) is derived on the basis of which the threshold value (O_{max} , O_{min} , O_{TR}) is set.

Claim 3 (previously presented): The method as in claim 2, wherein the threshold value (O_{TR}) is set by a differential amount (TR_{max}) above the mean level (I) of the input signal.

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Claim 4 (currently amended): The method as in claim
2, wherein the mean level (I) is derived from the input
3 signal s(t) along the following formula:

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$$[[I = \frac{I}{T} \times_{\mathcal{O}} \int_{-\infty}^{T} |s(t)| \times dt]] \qquad I = \frac{1}{T} \times_{\mathcal{O}} \int_{-\infty}^{T} |s(t)| \times dt$$

whereby an averaging function is performed over a time interval T.

Claim 5 (previously presented): The method as in claim 1, wherein a maximum threshold value (O_{max}) is established.

Claim 6 (previously presented): The method as in claim 5, wherein the maximum threshold value (O_{max}) is so selected as to be equal to an upper comfort level of a hearing-impaired person.

Claim 7 (previously presented): The method as in claim 1, wherein a minimum threshold value (O_{min}) is established.

Claim 8 (previously presented): The method as in claim 7, characterized in that the minimum threshold value (O_{min}) is so selected as to be equal to an output

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level that results from an input level of about 80 dB and

the corresponding amplification at that input level that

is produced for a hearing-impaired person.

Claim 9 (previously presented): The method as in

claim 3, wherein the differential amount (TR_{max}) is

adjusted along a compression ratio for a hearing-impaired

person.

Claim 10 (Original): Application of the method per one of the claims 1 to 9 for operating a hearing aid.

Claim 11 (previously presented): Application of the method per claim 6 for operation of a hearing aid by a hearing-impaired person.

Claim 12 (previously presented): A system for implementing the method per claim 1, characterized in that a processing unit is provided which receives an input signal and which permits within the processing unit the determination of a threshold value $(O_{max},\ O_{min},\ O_{TR})$ for the purpose of limiting the output signal, said threshold value $(O_{max},\ O_{min},\ O_{TR})$ being adjustable as a function of the level of the input signal.

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Claim 13 (previously presented): The system as in claim 12, wherein from the level of the input signal a mean level (I) can be determined by averaging.

Claim 14 (previously presented): The system as in claim13, wherein the threshold value (O_{TR}) can be adjusted to a point which by a differential amount (TR_{max}) is above the mean level (I) of the input signal.

Claim 15 (currently amended): The system as in claim 14, wherein the mean level (I) can be derived from the input signal s(t) by employing the following formula:

$$I = \frac{I}{T} \times_{O} \int |s(t)| \times dt$$

$$I = \frac{1}{T} \times_{O} \int |s(t)| \times dt$$

where an averaging function can be performed over a time interval T.

Claim 16 (previously presented): The system as in claim 12, wherein it permits a maximum threshold value (O_{max}) to be established.

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Claim 17 (previously presented): The system as in claim 16, wherein the maximum threshold value (O_{max}) can be selected to be equal to an upper comfort level of a hearing-impaired person.

Claim 18 (previously presented): The system as in claim 12, wherein it permits a minimum threshold value (O_{min}) to be established.

Claim 19 (previously presented): The system as in claim 18, wherein the minimum threshold value (O_{\min}) can be selected to be equal to a mean amplification value for a hearing-impaired person.

Claim 20 (previously presented): The system as in claim 13, wherein the differential amount (TR_{max}) can be adjusted corresponding to a compression ratio for a hearing-impaired person.